

# ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND HIGH SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Date: Thursday, December 16, 2021

Issue: 016

## AUTUMN 2 NEWSLETTER

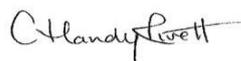
Dear Parent/Carer,

As we approach the end of the autumn term, we reflect on the trials and successes experienced. 2021 has seen staff and students at St Michael's tested: through a landscape of Covid safety measures; national school closures; and, tragically, suffering the loss of a beloved Headteacher, Mrs Jayne Gray. As a school, we have experienced grief and our hearts go out to everyone in our community who has suffered the loss of a loved one.

Nevertheless, as a school, we have experienced the power of love, care and kindness. We have seen how our Christian values have helped shaped our community response, lifting spirits and providing solace in time of need. I cannot fully express my gratitude and appreciation for the wonderful parental support given to the school at a time of crisis; your messages of encouragement and hope have been truly inspirational.

I wish you all a wonderful break and a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.

Kind regards,



Mrs Handy-Rivett  
Acting Headteacher

### UPCOMING NEWS & EVENTS:

Thursday 16 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Students break up for Christmas
Friday 17 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Staff Training Day
Tuesday 4 <sup>th</sup> January	Students return to school
Thursday 20 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Year 8 Parents' Evening
Thursday 17 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Year 7 'Shine Your Light' service
Friday 18 <sup>th</sup> February	Students break up for half term
Monday 28 <sup>th</sup> February	Students return to school

### OUR SCHOOL PRAYER

What does the  
*Lord* ask of you?

To act justly, to love mercy  
and to walk humbly with your  
God.

Micah 6vs.8



Acting Headteacher: Mrs C Handy-Rivett, BA (Hons), MA

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## REMEMBERING MRS GRAY

On Friday 19<sup>th</sup> November, we welcomed into school Mrs Gray's family and friends, members of the governing board and officials from the local authority and Birmingham Diocese to join staff and students in a service to give thanks and praise for the life of Mrs Gray and everything she brought to St Michael's. Mrs Handy-Rivett, Acting Headteacher, said that the day was "not about being upset for the loss we have all suffered...(but to) celebrate the life of an inspirational Headteacher who worked with passion, relentless drive and determination to make St Michael's the best it could be".



Mrs Gray's daughter, Amy, gave a moving speech in which she talked about the staff and students of St Michael's being like a second family to her mum, "she wanted every student...to be able to leave with a world of opportunities at their feet; for them to reach their fullest of potentials; to believe in themselves; and to achieve their wildest dreams...it is through you, that her legacy will live on".

Mrs Gray was a former ballerina and the celebration of her life included an array of dance, music and tributes to honour her memory.





## NETBALL

### Under 14s Netball League

The under 14 netball squad started the year back in September with hard training sessions. It was lovely to see so many students, who had not had the opportunity to be involved in any fixtures during their time at St Michael's, participating in the first training and trials for the netball squad and all of them rose to the challenge and were very motivated to succeed. Students concentrated on passing, movement defending and shooting in order to prepare for the league starting in October. The Under 14 League consisted of five games against schools in the south of Sandwell. The girls played with determination and resilience, never giving up, even when they were losing. Students showed the values of St Michael's throughout all matches, especially when playing away fixtures.

The following students gained the accolade of *Girl of the Game* during the league: Rayne Cox, Madison Harper, Mikayla Roberts, Mia Totney, Grace Popoola and Summer Uddin.

In January, Year 8 students will be invited back to train with Year 7, in order to act as role models and coaches.

#### Squad:

Year 8: Rayne Cox, Mia Totney, Kaitlin Hogan, Karolina Atanassova, Nyah Porter, Madison Harper, Molly Reeve, Summer Uddin

Year 9: Kareena Cheema, Grace Popoola, Bethany Taylor, Lacey Totney, Amelie Carpenter, Mikayla Roberts, Emelia Ali, Lyla Ali, Grace Darby, Lucy Jones.



Under 14 and Under 16 Netball Squads

### Under 16s Netball League

Year 10 and 11 students also attended training back in September. Students in Key Stage 4 have had to manage their time around interventions and other opportunities in order to ensure their commitment to their team mates and the netball team. We, as their coaches/teachers, are really impressed with their commitment, and also their organisation, to ensure they are training and at matches but still prioritising their school work. Students have played tenaciously in order to secure some excellent wins. The respect they have for each other as a team is so inspiring to us as teachers and to younger squad members. They really are showing us what it means to play for St Michael's and how team work and resilience are just as important as skill. Well done girls, you have been a pleasure to coach and teach this term!

The following students gained the accolade of *Girl of the Game* during the league: Amy-Leigh Tolley, Amina Tunkara, Kiera Grigg, Kitty Hill and Ellie Siverns.

#### Squad:

Year 10: Myicah Blackwood, Tayla Spooner, Kitty Hill, Amy-Leigh Tolley

Year 11: Keira Grigg (Captain), Ellie Siverns (Vice Captain), Chloe Emms, Amina Tunkara, Ameerah Ishola

### Under 16s Netball Tournament

The under 16 netball squad took part in the Sandwell Network Tournament on 8<sup>th</sup> November, hosted by George Salter. The students played six matches against a variety of schools across the borough of Sandwell. 12 girls across Years 8-11 were picked for the squad, based on their resilience, determination, skill and commitment to training. Students gained the experience of different abilities of opposition and did really well to gain 4<sup>th</sup> place overall.

*Tournament Girl of the Game:* Keira Grigg

*Teacher Girl of the Game:* Myicah Blackwood

Squad:

Year 11: Keira Grigg, Ellie Siverns, Chloe Emms, Amina Tunkara

Year 10: Kitty Hill, Amy-Leigh Tolley, Myicah Blackwood, Tayla Spooner

Year 9: Lacey Totney

Year 8: Caitlin Hogan, Rayne Cox

## YOGA

On 2<sup>nd</sup> December we invited local primary schools to attend a 90-minute yoga session with Mrs Faulkner and leaders from Year 10. Year 3 students from Oakham, Rowley Hall and Springfield met in the Sports Hall for a mindful and fun yoga session. Our Year 10 leaders led the session with confidence and excellent knowledge to provide fun warm up games, a variety of postures, a yoga story about a pet shop and finished with partner postures to perform at the end. All students left with a certificate and stickers for their hard work and participation. All students really enjoyed the event and we are looking forward to inviting Years 1 and 2 to our gymnastics on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

Student leaders: Jessica Day, Jessica Dipple, Ellie-Mae Smart, Kacey Hughes, Alex Allan, Noelle Cossu, Shannon Lovesey, Amy-Leigh Tolley and Charlee-Jo Coley





## CONGRATULATIONS

...to two of our students who took Grade 5 exams on their brass instruments last week and passed:

- **Reegan Jenkins** – Grade 5 Tenor Horn – passed with Merit
- **Peter Wilmott** – Grade 5 Tuba – passed with Distinction



## COMPUTING NEWS



### Year 7 Micro:bits Club

On Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> December we were able to launch our first Computing club since the onset of Covid. We had 14 students attend, where they were able to discover the amazing uses of a Micro:bit.

This exciting opportunity allowed the club to explore block based programming to display Christmas messages and symbols on the bits themselves. Students discovered the programming basics that allowed them to download their program onto the Micro:bit. Students programmed a range of Christmas images and messages and then hung them onto the tree to create a Christmas tree only Computing geeks could dream of!



**ST MICHAEL'S**  
Church of England High Sch





## PRIMARY PE

### Flag Football CPD

Flag football is a non-contact version of American football, where tackles are made by pulling off flags which all players wear on their hips. It is suitable for boys and girls of all shapes and sizes at both secondary and primary level.

We have funding to host flag football CPD, mastery classes and a festival event for 13 of our primary feeder schools. The first one-day training course for the Level 1 certificate took place on 8<sup>th</sup> November and was delivered by the UK Dukes to 12 members of staff; unfortunately, as attendance was impacted by isolated primary school restrictions, only 4 of the primary schools were represented. We are looking forward to introducing flag football into our curriculum in the Spring Term of 2022, as well as a master class in the summer term for St Michael's and primary pupils to experience.

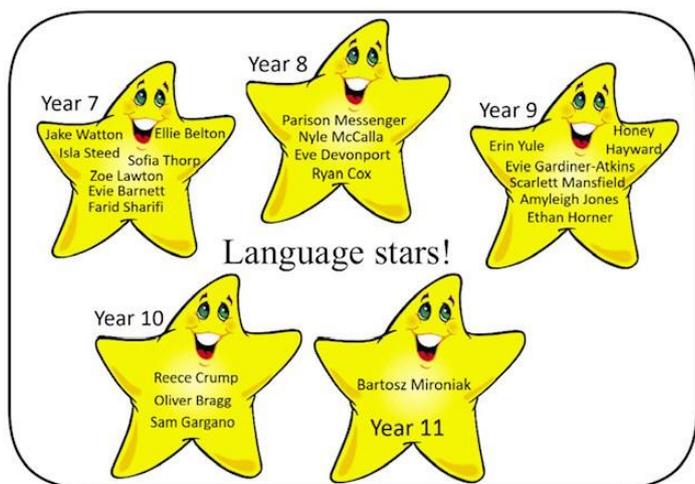
### Year 6 primary netball workshop

The first primary school to take part in the netball workshop was Oakham Primary School's Year 6. Mrs Faulkner and Mr Stewart took 6 Year 8 leaders to assist in the session on passing, footwork, attacking and shooting, with a mini tournament at the end. Year 6 students were motivated and enthused by the session and we hope they use their skills in the future, especially if they join our St Michael's family in September!

Our Year 8 student leaders were an asset to the session, ensuring teaching points were reiterated, acting as coaches and organisers throughout. They were a true reflection of our student cohort at St Michael's with their care and compassion, motivation and leadership skills.

Year 8 leaders: Rayne Cox, Caitlin Hogan, Karolina Atanassova, Hannah Davis, Eve Bennett (Year 7)

## MFL

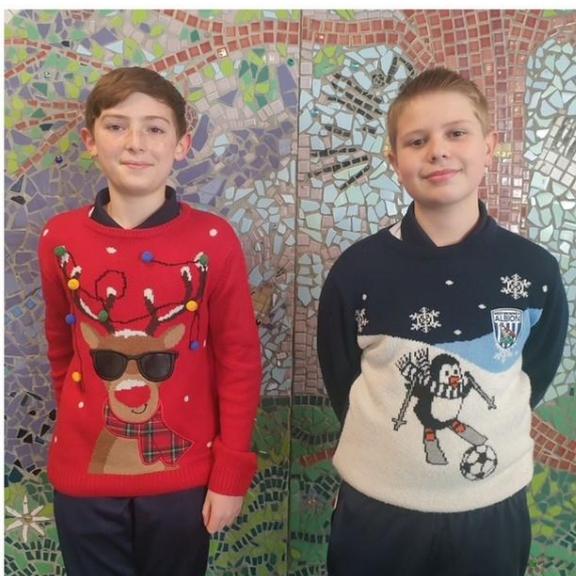


Merry Christmas from the Modern Foreign Languages department. Well done to our Year 7s who have made a brilliant start to their languages lessons. Year 8 & 9s are really starting to master those tenses, Year 10 have made an excellent start to their GCSEs and our Year 11s are powering through their mocks.

## JOLLY JUMPER DAY



On Friday 10<sup>th</sup> December, students and staff took part in Jolly Jumper day in exchange for a £1 contribution, with all proceeds going to Birmingham Children's Hospital and Birmingham Women's Hospital. So far, we have raised £710, although festive fundraising activities are continuing until the end of the week.



Here are just a few of the fabulous jumpers we saw that day – including Mr Lawson's 3D jolly jumper, winner of the staff competition!

See more of our festive activities on the next page.

## CHRISTMAS FESTIVITIES

The school band played carols during the lunch break on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> December



Christmas Lucky Dip

A massive thank you to members of staff in our Science department who, instead of a departmental Secret Santa exchange, decided to donate the money and produced hampers for distribution to families in need.



Phoenix Somerfield in Year 11 designed and produced this beautiful decoration in memory of Mrs Gray. This has taken pride of place on our tree.

## LIBRARY NEWS



### Year 7 Book Quiz

Year 7 students were each asked to read a book and remember as much detail about it as possible. As well as answering questions on the 4 books, they were also quizzed on their book general knowledge. The aim was to provide some fun and competition amongst the students and it provided a fantastic opportunity for them to become involved with reading

before the start of the Christmas holidays; there were prizes for the runners up and a trophy for the winners.

The 4 books selected for Year 7 students to read this year were:

- *The Night I met Father Christmas* by Ben Miller
- *Bad Dad* by David Walliams
- *The Creakers* by Tom Fletcher
- *Mr Stink* by David Walliams

It was a close competition throughout the final but 7M were well deserved winners.

Congratulations to:

Sofia Thorp, Amber Peters Williams, Thomas Ward, Edward Walton and 2 reserves Leah Charles and Mae Saddler.

**Well done to all the students who competed!**

### Book Fair

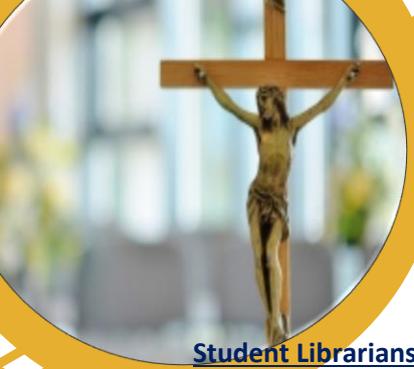


At the beginning of December, we ran our annual Scholastic Book Fair. Due to Covid, it had been necessary to postpone the event several times, so it was lovely to eventually be able to host it in school after so long.

Students and staff were invited to come along to the library and browse the range of fiction and non-fiction books on sale; there was a huge selection to browse, with titles starting from as little as £1.99.

It was lovely to see so many students taking an interest in the book fair and getting involved in the activities being held alongside the fair, including a raffle with the prize of a gift basket to the value of over £25.

Over £500 was raised during the week, which is the most ever raised at a Book Fair; this resulted in the library receiving 40% commission, which equated to over £200 worth of books. This is truly amazing, so thank you to everyone who supported us – students will benefit enormously from the new books we can now add to our library collection.



### **Student Librarians**

Following our advert for new student librarians at the start of term, there were over 50 applicants, which is the most we have ever had! All the applications were of a very high standard and it was very difficult to reach a shortlist for interview – we interviewed 20 students from Years 7, 8 and 9, 14 of which were appointed.

They will take part in a wide range of tasks to help with the day-to-day running of the library, as well as contributing ideas on the library’s development and helping to organise events and activities.

Our new student librarians are:

#### **Year 7**

Sofia, Ruby, Thomas, Callum, George, Alissia, Sophie

#### **Year 8**

Charlotte, Esme, Emily, Sophie, Nathan

#### **Year 9**

Olivia, Chloe

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## **COVID-19: LATEST GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE**

An extract from the DfE information notification sent out on 13<sup>th</sup> December:

### **Daily testing for contacts of COVID-19**

From Tuesday 14 December, a new national approach to daily testing for contacts of COVID-19 (has been) introduced (including until the end of this term). All adults who are fully vaccinated and children aged 5 to 18 years and 6 months, identified as a contact of someone with COVID-19 – whether Omicron or not – should take a lateral flow device (LFD) test every day for 7 days instead of self-isolating. Daily testing by close contacts will help to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Once notified by NHS Test and Trace as a close contact, all eligible staff, pupils and students should take an LFD each day for 7 days and report the results through the [Online Reporting System](#) and to their setting. If they test negative, they can continue to attend their education setting. Outside of the education setting, they should continue to follow the advice set out in the [Sunday 12 December press release](#). This approach should also be adopted over the winter break and on return in January.

If they test positive, they should self-isolate and [order a PCR test](#) to confirm the result. If the PCR is positive, they must self-isolate for 10 days. If the PCR test is negative, they no longer need to self-isolate but should continue to carry out the remainder of the daily tests, and only need to isolate if it is positive.

Finally, it is important to continue regular twice weekly, at-home testing for all education and childcare workforce and all students of secondary age and above.



# Mental Health Matters

'Tis the season to be jolly, but not for everybody. Christmas can be one of the most stressful times of the year, and given the bizarre year we've all experienced, this Christmas period could be more stressful than normal.

So, if you're feeling stressed this festive season, keep your cool and carry on with these tips.



**1** It might sound like the most British thing ever, but a nice cuppa really can help to de-stress. Take a time out from the spiced lattes and try chamomile tea. 'This herb calms frayed nerves and is actually an extremely mild sedative,' says health and fitness coach Jamie Lloyd.



**2** Get organised – easier said than done, but worth taking time over. Plan family gatherings, activities or events in advance and stick to them. Set time aside for certain tasks / jobs and allow longer than you think. If you finish sooner, you'll have more spare time and feel a sense of achievement.



**3** Eat smartly. Yes, it's time to smash open those tubs of chocolates you've stockpiled since September but not all foods make us feel great. Spicy food, alcohol and coffee all stimulate the nervous system so, like most things, these are best in moderation as they can cause body imbalances and affect sleep.

**4**

Remain active. Yes, it's great to unwind, relax and treat yourself to a Quality Street (or 4 or 5) but take time to get physical too. Crank up those Christmas tunes and dance in the kitchen or walk off a meal by taking a stroll around your estate viewing people's Christmas decorations.



**5**

Don't be afraid to ask for help! Trying to do everything single-handedly will only increase stress and frustration levels. Get your children involved in preparing meals or tidying up afterwards (expect the odd grunt aimed at you in return).

**6**

Make time for **YOU!** Yes, Christmas is about spending time together as a family but lots of people, noise, hustle and bustle in small spaces can be overwhelming at times. Try to find a sanctuary in your house, even if it's locking yourself away in the bathroom for a few minutes. Just don't tell people where you're heading, otherwise you'll have children knocking on the door!

Another way to feel good over the festive period is to help others less fortunate than ourselves. This could be helping out an elderly neighbour or donating to a local food bank or charity.



If you are struggling over Christmas there is always someone on hand to listen and support. These help centres are open every day of the year.

[www.menshealthforum.org.uk](http://www.menshealthforum.org.uk)  
PAPYRUS (young suicide prevention) 0800 068 4141  
Samaritans 116 123 (24hrs)  
NSPCC 0800 1111 (24 hrs)

## Have a safe & merry Christmas!